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REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Sonnets of Shakespeare. From the Quarto of 1609 with Variorum Readings and Commentary. Edited by RAYMOND MACDONALD ALDEN. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916. Pp. xix+542.

A *New Shakespeare Quarto. The Tragedy of King Richard II.* Printed for the third time by Valentine Simmes in 1598. Reproduced in facsimile from the unique copy in the library of William Augustus White. With an Introduction by ALFRED W. POLLARD. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1916. Pp. 104+Sig. A-I.

Shaksperian Studies. By Members of the Department of English and Comparative Literature in Columbia University. Edited by BRANDER MATTHEWS and ASHLEY HORACE THORNDIKE. New York: Columbia University Press, 1916. Pp. vii+452.

These volumes, representing in three different fields notable products of the Shakespeare Tercentenary, show a degree of excellence that makes the reviewer's task comparatively simple.

Professor Alden's edition of the Sonnets, following the plan and method of Furness' New Variorum editions of Shakespeare's plays, and uniform with those volumes in presswork, size, and binding, is worthy of its place in the series. As far as I can judge, the immense task of reprinting the original text of 1609 and recording variant readings of later editions, of selecting and abridging all important annotation, and of digesting the vast literature on the Sonnets, has been performed with excellent judgment and remarkable accuracy. The introductory pages and the appendix give the history of the text and of the schools of interpreters, select passages of criticism, the important sources, and summaries of the varied arguments on the arrangement of the Sonnets and on the biographical interpretations centering around "the onlie begetter," the Friend, the Rival Poet, and the Dark Lady. Personally I regret that in this edition special attention has not been given to the influence exerted on Shakespeare's Sonnets by Petrarchan, Platonic, and Court-of-Love conventions. If, however, one were inclined to regret the absence of a full record of the vagaries of biographical and other interpretations, a glance at Mr. Alden's enormous bibliography for the Sonnets will give him pause. Yet either a short summary of other theories in regard to the Dark Lady should have been included with the survey of the influence of

Willobie's *Avisa* on the surmises in regard to her, or cross references should have been given to parts of the appendix and notes where other theories are stated, for Dark Lady, Friend, and Rival Poet do not appear in the index to aid one in following the history of the interpretation of the Sonnets.

For students of Shakespeare interested especially in bibliography and text, the most important contribution of the tercentenary year of Shakespeare's death is the discovery and publication in facsimile of a new Quarto of *Richard II*. The volume is a beautiful specimen of book-making, and the reproductions are remarkably clear and uniform. It is gratifying that this Quarto is edited by A. W. Pollard, whose recent bibliographical works have contributed so much to the understanding of Shakespeare and his fellows. His long introductory essay on the text of *Richard II* gives a systematic catalogue, analysis, and classification of all the errors and the notable variations of the texts in the order of their publication, from the Quarto of 1597 through the Folio. Some critic may rise to challenge details of his conclusion, but the method must remain a model. In this investigation the new Quarto, the second belonging to the year 1598, based on the first of that year, aids materially. It derives further importance from the possibility, considered by Mr. Pollard but rejected, that it was used for the Folio text. Mr. Pollard's conclusion is that the Quarto of 1597 furnishes the text nearest to Shakespeare's original form, and that the Folio was set from the fifth Quarto, that of 1615, with some revisions from a copy of the first Quarto used by Shakespeare's company, in which certain corrections of the text, variations in the stage directions, and omissions of passages were found. To my mind, the chief difficulty in accepting this conclusion as final lies in the doubt as to whether fifty lines found in the Quarto of 1615 would have been omitted in the Folio. An interesting deduction of the editor is that Shakespeare's original manuscript was probably used for setting up the first Quarto, and that the punctuation of this Quarto, scant in the main, was intended to guide the actor in the rendering of the lines.

The Columbia *Shaksperian Studies*, with no brilliant essays giving individualistic interpretations or striking discoveries, is very valuable for its inquiries into the methods and purposes of Shakespearian study and for its application of modern logical methods, in various ways, to Shakespearian problems. One essay surveys the points of view and the methods of those who have sought to interpret Shakespeare's personality. Others deal with his use of his sources, with the principles of pronunciation in his day, with stage tradition as contributing to interpretation, with the points of view of American editors, with the interpretation of *Midsummer Night's Dream* in its presentations on the New York stage at various periods, with the structure and characterization of *Julius Caesar* in the light of Shakespeare's sources and his variations on them, with the meaning of *Troilus and Cressida*, with the artistic power of *Romeo and Juliet*, with Parolles not as a weak reflection of Falstaff but as a reflection of Elizabethan manners, with a comparison of

the modern point of view in regard to Henry V with the Renaissance idealization of him as a man of action, with a rational analysis of Hamlet ("Reality and Inconsistency in Shakspeare's Characters"), with "Shakspeare on His Art," with "Shakspeare and the Medieval Lyric." On the whole, the volume furnishes an excellent example of modern historical and common-sense criticism.

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English Literature from Widsith to the Death of Chaucer. A Source Book. By ALLEN ROGERS BENHAM. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1916. Pp. xxviii+634.

The title of this book is misleading since the work itself contains little material dealing directly with literature. A survey of the table of contents reveals this fact and at the same time the real character of the book. The two chapters into which the work is divided, the first treating of England to the Norman Conquest (pp. 1-139), the second, of the period to the death of Chaucer (pp. 140-613), are arranged under the following headings: The political background, social and industrial background, cultural background, linguistic background, literary characteristics, representative authors. Obviously the aim of the book is not to present the literature of the period but to give such a historical and cultural background as will make an understanding of the literature possible: it is in fact a source book for mediaeval English history. This purpose it fulfils very well. It gives extracts (in translation) from chronicles, sermons, poems (chiefly illustrative of aspects of mediaeval life); in footnotes it offers extensive bibliographical information. In nearly all cases the passages selected are well chosen, and the total effect of the book is to give perhaps the best general impression of mediaeval English life to be found between the covers of a single volume.

Individuals will naturally differ in their opinions as to what such a book should contain. To one reader at least the treatment of literature seems inadequate. Only three literary types—romance, drama, history—are exhibited in the Middle English period. Of the translations from Old English poetry none is in the old metrical form. There are, moreover, errors in some of the translations: on page 35, for example, *since* is rendered "treasured life" and *æfter maddum-welan*, "thereafter." The literal meanings fit perfectly. More important, however, is the mistranslation of the refrain in "Deor's Lament" (see Lawrence, *Mod. Phil.*, IX, 23 ff.). In a note on page 72 Beadohild and Mæthilde are said to be the same despite the wide divergence of opinions among scholars. The translation of *bryne* as "shield" on p. 371 (*Gawain and the Green Knight*) makes nonsense out of the passage. The sentence on p. 91, "Old English literature is characterized by its simple